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ABSTRACT

Designed for writers of state and local career education plans and projects who are required to make statements of policy when applying for funds, this model policy statement contains eight major justifications for career education. Career education is defined as the totality of experiences through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of her or his way of living. Next, the statement gives a primary role of career education, which is to facilitate concepts, attitudes, and skills related to the career development aspects of general growth and learning, and a secondary role--to help facilitate basic academic skills through the infusion of work-related concepts and activities into academic subject areas. The rest of the paper is devoted to amplification and further delineation of the primary and secondary role of career education. A bibliography is included. (BB)

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A MODEL POLICY STATEMENT ON CAREER EDUCATION FOR USE BY STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

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Preface

On December 13, 1977 President Carter signed into law the Career Education Incentive Act (P.L. 95-207). Assuming Congressional appropriation of funds, the act is intended to further nationwide implementation of career education by providing financial incentives to a wide variety of educational institutions.

One effect of the act will be to require state agencies and local school districts to make application for funds. Such applications, among other things, will typically include a statement of policy.

In response to many requests for assistance in planning and developing programs of career education, the author has prepared the attached, sample policy statement. It is designed to provide direction to writers of state and local career education plans and projects. It is offered as a service by the writer and Southern Illinois University.

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A MODEL POLICY STATEMENT ON CAREER EDUCATION

FOR USE BY STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

Theory and Rationale

The concept of career education began to take form during the early 1960s in both the career guidance movement[1] and in the phenomenon known as the "reorientation of vocational education."[2] It was not until 1970, however, that former Commissioner of Education James E. Allen introduced the term career education in a speech before the National Association of Secondary School Principals.[3] A year later, Allen's predecessor, Sidney P. Marland, elevated the concept to the level of a national education priority in his famous "Career Education Now"[4] speech. The evolution of career education since 1971 has been one of the more remarkable movements in the history of education.[5] The magnitude of scholarly literature, research, commercial and non-commercial instructional materials is already larger than many of the more established content areas in education. While a definitive and comprehensive theory of career education remains to be written, and while many legitimate problems and issues are still at hand, that which is presently known is sufficient to establish a valid conceptual base and a solid, defensible rationale for the further implementation of career education.

A frequently cited explanation for the emergence of career education is the notion of career education being a response to calls for educational reform. Former Commissioner Terel Bell's observations are a good case in point:

> Career Education is an idea which has become a movement . . . I believe Career Education to be the most viable vehicle for needed educational reform to come along in many a year. It has been forged from local needs and built by local expertise. School personnel at every level are nearly exploding with ideas and implementing the concept. In an amazingly brief time, the idea of Career Education has taken root, has been nurtured by instant advocates, and has born blossoms in nearly all of the fifty states and six territories . . . The Council of Chief State School Officers estimates that almost five thousand of the seventeen thousand school districts in the United States will have active Career programs in the 1974-75 school year. Those who in the past have contended that it takes fifty years for any good idea to become common practice in American education are being proved wrong by Career Education.[6]

The Meaning of Reform

The word reform should not be casually associated with career education unless one truly means it. That is, reform means change! It means modifying and reorganizing a system. It means understanding and adopting new assumptions, new curriculum frameworks, and new roles for administrators, practitioners, and learners.[7] Following are examples of changes which career education can help to foster.

From	To
SCHOOLING (emphasis on courses taken, subjects completed, and "seat time")	EDUCATION (learning how to learn, how to cope, how to function)
TEACHER-ORIENTED CLASSROOMS	STUDENT-ORIENTED CLASSROOMS
VICARIOUS, PASSIVE STUDENT ROLES	ACTIVE, EXPERIENTIAL STUDENT ROLES
SUBJECT-BASED OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE-BASED OBJECTIVES
PRIMARILY COGNITIVE OBJECTIVES	COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE AND PSYCHOMOTOR OBJECTIVES

SINGLE MODE OF INSTRUCTION (traditional, self-contained, group-oriented classrooms)	PLURALISTIC MODES OF INSTRUCTION (individualization, open classrooms, work-study, etc. and traditional classrooms)

Educational reform is a term which evokes strong emotions. To the person confronted by change, a natural human tendency is to question the need, or to deny the existence of conditions which are symptomatic of problems and deficiencies. Such skeptics deserve answers. Answers to the general question of "Why is education in need of reform?", and the specific question of "Why career education?" are of three types: (1) social and economic reasons, (2) philosophical reasons, and (3) psychological reasons.[8] Major justifications for career education based on these areas are summarized below.

- Nationwide costs for education have increased to over $100 billion per year. Yet, millions of students drop out of schools and colleges annually. The public is demanding a more accountable educational system at a reasonable cost.
- The Department of Labor predicts that by 1980, only 11 percent of the available jobs will require a baccalaureate degree. Despite this, public schools continue to emphasize college preparatory curricula at the expense of a broader range of educational/occupational alternatives.[9]
- Too many persons leave school with deficiencies in both basic academic skills and life coping skills. They are neither prepared to continue their role as learner, nor to assume adult life roles such as citizen, parent-spouse, worker, leisurer.
- Business and industry complain of worker apathy and alienation. Workers complain of boredom and frustration. The condition of "under-employment" is a significant one for both parties.
- The economic and societal importance of work has dominated thought about its meaning. Far less attention has been paid to the personal meaning of work. Yet, it is clear from recent research that work plays a crucial and perhaps unparalleled role in the formation of self-esteem, identity, sense of order, and even longevity.[10]
- The educational/occupational needs of women, minorities, and special needs learners are not being adequately met.

- Existing programs in vocational education and the practical arts have not sufficiently reflected awareness and knowledge of the career development aspect of general growth and learning.

- Existing programs of general education have not sufficiently reflected awareness and knowledge of what constitutes a true, liberal education. Education and work are rightly inseparable. Growing up to work has been an underlying concept of civilized people's self development since the beginning of educational history."[11]

Purpose and Definitions

Consistent with the U.S. Office of Education's policy paper on career education, _____(insert agency name)_____ defines career education to mean, "the totality of experiences through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of her or his way of living."[12] This definition is based on a broad consensus of views from among many different types of education professionals. It is simple, concise, and clearly communicates the purpose of career education. In accomplishing this purpose, two roles will need to be assumed:[13]

The primary role for career education is to facilitate concepts, attitudes, and skills related to the career development aspect of general growth and learning.

The secondary role for career education is to help facilitate basic academic skills through the infusion of work-related concepts and activities into academic subject areas.

These two roles are complementary, and both are equally important. However, to fail to understand the difference between the two roles, or to do one without doing the other, would be to lessen the potential for

career education as a vehicle for reform. Further discussion and use of examples will help to clarify this contention.

Primary Role: To Facilitate Career Development

The importance of focusing on this role is to correct a deficiency in many earlier statements of career education purpose. Donald Super, in a monograph commissioned by the U.S. Office of Career Education, states: "When the concepts of career development are more widely understood, and when its methods and materials are more visible, career education will have come of age." [14] Implicit in this statement is the need to distinguish between ends and means.

The concept of ends is used to refer to the learning outcomes of education. It is synonymous with purposes, aims, goals, and objectives. Means, on the other hand, refers to the topics, activities, materials, methods, curricula, etc., by which such ends are developed.

An analogy will help to illustrate this distinction. Language arts is a name for a curriculum which is designed to facilitate the process of communications.[15] What are the learning outcomes? The language arts teacher is concerned with developing concepts and skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and acting out (ends).

In the same way that language arts is a curriculum designed to facilitate the process of communications, career education is the name of a curriculum designed to facilitate the process of career development. Whereas learning outcomes (objectives) can be derived from an analysis of the construct of communication, learning outcomes can be similarly derived from an analysis of the construct of career development.

Many curriculum theorists have offered their interpretation of

learning outcomes which can be deduced from the construct of career development. One such list of goals and objectives is contained in the Illinois Office of Education's publication entitled A Teacher's Handbook on Career Development for Students With Special Needs: Grades K-12.[16] The six categories of learning outcomes identified are:

1. Understanding and implementing self.
2. Understanding occupational, educational, and economic concepts.
3. Accepting responsibility for career planning.
4. Developing skills in decision-making and information processing.
5. Relating to individuals and groups.
6. Developing and clarifying attitudes and values toward work.

These six types of learning outcomes are further defined at three levels of generality: goals, general objectives, and specific objectives. Once objectives are identified, content (topics, activities, materials, and methods) can be developed or selected to facilitate the respective outcomes. The reader should be cautioned at this point about assuming that a separate curriculum is automatically required. There are many effective ways to fuse career development objectives with other types of curriculum objectives.[17]

Secondary Role: To Help Facilitate Basic Academic Skills

In this approach, teachers utilize topics, activities, materials, and methods related to "work" to infuse the conventional subject areas such as math, science, language arts, and social studies. At present, this

is the most common form in which career education is being implemented, especially at the elementary school level.

The teaching of basic academic skills such as reading, writing, computing, measuring, observing, using space/time relationships, drawing logical conclusions from historical events, etc., can be made more relevant and concrete through the use of "work-related" concepts and activities. Examples might include: (1) Using books about occupational clusters to teach reading; (2) Writing themes about "My Future Career Goals;" (3) Learning to spell words associated with a certain occupational role; (4) Conducting a simulation of a supermarket to help students learn how to make change; and, (5) Taking a field trip to a water treatment plant to observe how chemical processes are used to purify water.

Relationships Between the Two Roles

The differentiation between two roles for career education is more than a simple matter of semantics.[18] The successful achievement of the first role will require schools to introduce and emphasize new learning outcomes which have not traditionally been a part of the curriculum. The successful achievement of the second role only requires schools to introduce new content and methods. Again, examples will help to clarify this distinction.

A. The learner objective dealing with "Explores occupational clusters to validate occupational preferences and to develop new knowledge and attitudes", is an example of an important outcome for career education that is not currently being met in the majority of the Nation's schools (primary role).

B. Using a variety of materials in teaching reading, however, is currently being done. Using materials and methods related to work, to teach reading, may be an additional way to add interest and relevance (secondary role).

However, note how misleading it is to say reading about occupations is "career education". This is akin to saying that reading about dinosaurs is "dinosaur education". Also, consider how limiting it is to only view career education as a means to facilitate basic academic skills. Academically talented students who have already mastered basic skills may have no idea of "what they are going to do with their lives".

Obviously both approaches are important. Learning about and preparing for work, and developing mastery of basic academic skills are rightly inseparable. The best programs of career education will be those in which teachers combine a career development objective with another knowledge, attitude or skill objective. A number of effective curriculums, and model programs have already been developed which can be used as prototypes by those wanting to implement career education.

Summary

This policy statement has revealed an awareness of the conditions which career education seeks to address. The purpose of assisting students in learning about and preparing for work is a valid and legitimate aim of American public education. It is not the exclusive aim, but rather one of several equally important and worthwhile aims. In the words of Kenneth Hoyt, Director of the Office of Career Education, it is time to get on with it!

As a response to a call for educational reform, career education has operated as a paper priority of American Education for the last three years (now 7 years). During this period, it has demonstrated its acceptability, as a direction for change to both educators and to the general public. Its widespread application to all of American Education has not yet taken place. If successful efforts in this direction can now be made, the result should be complete integration of career education concepts into the total fabric of all American Education. When this has been accomplished, the result should be abandonment of the term 'Career Education' and adoption of some other major direction for educational change. The call for educational reform, to which career education seeks to respond, is still strong and persistent across the land. That call can no longer be ignored. Career Education stands ready to serve as a vehicle for answering the call. It is time that this vehicle is used.[19]

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